



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest Service

Center of  
Learning

November 2012



# **WELCOME**

## **to the**

# **Forest Service**

# **A Guidebook for**

# **New Employees**

## Welcome to the Forest Service: A Guidebook for New Employees

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# Welcome to the Forest Service: A Guidebook for New Employees

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## PREFACE

**Congratulations on your new job!** Once the celebration dies down, it's only natural for nervous excitement to kick in. Psychologists rank starting a new job as one of the 10 most stressful events we go through in our lives. But don't let that get you down. Take your energy and focus it on something positive - succeeding at your new career.

In the next 30 days you can expect to:

- Learn the lay of the land.
- Meet your co-workers.
- Establish a communication system with your supervisor.
- Start on your way to a successful career.

During your first few weeks in the Forest Service, you will learn about our Service as well as about your own work. This is part of your orientation to your new job; it tells you where you are in the Forest Service and how you fit in with what others do. This guidebook is part of that program, and it is yours to keep. It has been given to you to help you fit in with the team of men and women who make the Forest Service what it is: a first-class Government Agency doing a big and important job.

Use this Guidebook as you would use any tool. Access it when you need it; put it aside when you don't, but keep it handy. It's meant to answer questions for you and perhaps lead you into asking other questions. It will help you better manage your own job and career in the Forest Service. You will learn where to find answers to many of your questions, especially by visiting the recommended web pages. Some of the pages are external www pages; some are internal meaning you will need to be able to access the Forest Service Intranet. A few pages are on our Intranet Portal which requires you to enter through your eAuthentication. USDA eAuthentication is the system used by USDA agencies to enable employees and others access to USDA Web applications and services via the Internet. It can take a few weeks to get this access. In the meantime, your supervisor and coworkers will be glad to assist you with anything you may need.



# Welcome to the Forest Service: A Guidebook for New Employees

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**Forest Service Motto**

**Caring for the Land and  
Serving People**

## WELCOME TO THE FOREST SERVICE

Welcome to the largest agency within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). As a Forest Service employee, you will be helping manage resources that are increasingly important to our Nation.

This guide will provide you with a brief history of the Forest Service, an overview of programs, and some information you will need to work safely and productively for the agency. We hope it helps you become at ease in your new position.

## ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FOREST SERVICE

When the first European settlers arrived on American soil, forests covered nearly all the land from the Eastern Sea-board to the Great Plains. Due to concern about deforestation and unregulated cutting, laws to protect timber stands were passed as early as 1807. Such laws were virtually ignored.

In 1891, Congress gave the President the power to establish forest reserves from the public domain to protect timber and to ensure a regular flow of water in streams. The forest reserves were placed under the administration of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

In 1905, management of the forest reserves was transferred to a new agency in the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Forest Service. Gifford Pinchot was named the first Chief. Other land management agencies, such as the National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management, are in the U.S. Department of the Interior. In a letter dated February 1, 1905, Secretary of Agriculture James Wilson laid out the guiding principles of the Forest Service to the new Chief. An excerpt of the letter follows:

“In the administration of the forest reserves, it must be clearly borne in mind that all land is to be devoted to the most productive use for the permanent good of the whole people and not for the temporary benefit of individuals or companies.... You will see to it that the water, wood, and forage of the reserves are conserved and wisely used under businesslike regulations enforced with promptness, effectiveness, and common sense.... Where conflicting interests must be reconciled, the question will always be decided from the standpoint of the greatest good for the greatest number in the long run....”

James Wilson  
Secretary of Agriculture, 1897 to 1913

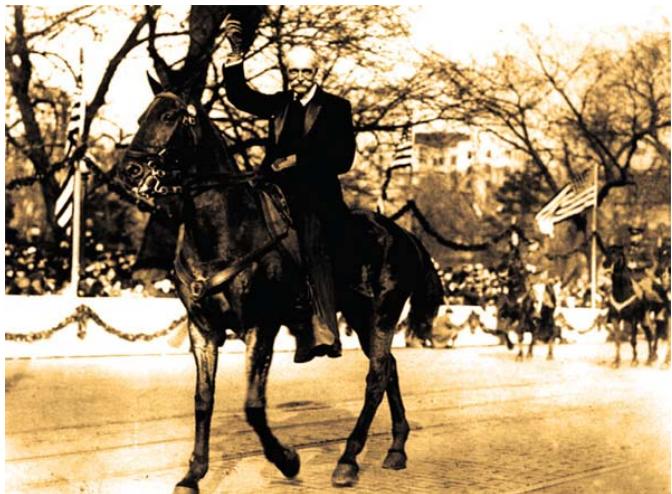


Figure 1-Gifford Pinchot, Governor of Pennsylvania (Chief of the Forest Service, 1905 to 1910), rides up Pennsylvania Avenue in President Coolidge's inaugural parade.

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## THE BIG PICTURE

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There are three main branches of the U.S. Government:

- The Executive Branch (The President, the departments, and the agencies)
- The Legislative Branch (The Congress)
- The Judicial Branch (The Supreme Court and other Federal courts)

The Executive Branch, as directed by the President, carries out the working programs of the Government.

## THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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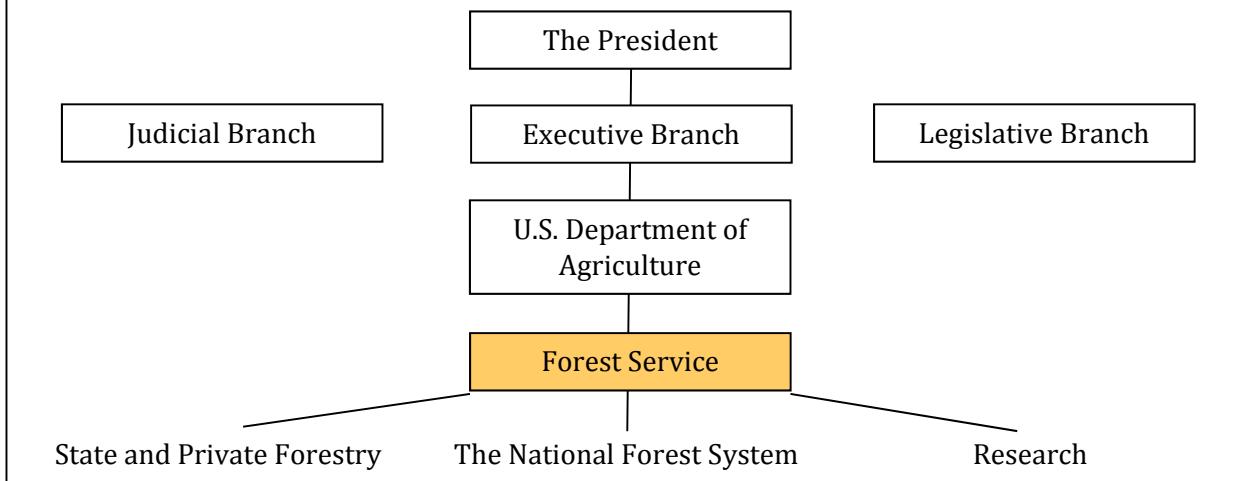
The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is part of the Executive Branch. It carries out the working programs in agriculture and has served the people for over 100 years. You are now part of the USDA. Be sure to visit the USDA web page to learn more about USDA and how you fit in.

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For more information go to the USDA internet page <http://www.usda.gov>  
and the USDA internal page <http://www.hqnet.usda.gov/>

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**The Forest Service is part of the U.S. Government. This is where we fit in.**



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## THE FOREST SERVICE (FS)

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Forest Service employees contribute in many ways to the care of the Nation's forests and rangelands and serve the needs of the people who own them. In short all of us strengthen the Nation for future generations and we are proud of our role. We have about 30,000 permanent employees and, at times, almost as many temporary workers.

The Forest Service is a leader in the conservation and wise use of the Nation's forests and rangelands. We manage the National Forests and Grasslands, cooperate with the States to help private landowners apply good forest practices on their lands, and do research to find better ways to manage and use our natural resources. To accomplish this mission, we are organized into three basic areas: the National Forest System, Research and Development, and State and Private Forestry.

## NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM (NFS)

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The National Forest System includes 155 national forests and 20 national grasslands, covering 193 million acres of land in 44 States, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. These lands represent some of the Nation's greatest assets and have major economic, environmental, and social significance for millions of Americans.

As directed by Congress, renewable forest resources such as water, timber, forage, wildlife, and recreation are managed under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield. Multiple use means managing resources under the best combination of uses to benefit the American people while ensuring the productivity of the land and protecting the quality of the environment. Sustained yield means that resources are managed to provide services and products at a level that can be sustained without harming the land's ability to continue producing those services and products.

### National Level

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The highest level of the National Forest System is the national level, commonly called the Washington Office (WO). The person who oversees the entire Forest Service is called the Chief or the Chief Forester of the United States and is located in DC. The Chief, a Federal employee, reports to the Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment in the USDA. The Chief's staff provides broad policy and direction for the agency, works with the President's administration to develop a budget to submit to Congress, provides information to Congress on accomplishments, and monitors the agency's activities.



Figure 2-Wildflowers in Franklin Basin along a road north of the Utah-Idaho State line (includes Curlew National Grasslands). Courtesy Ann Keysor, Caribou-Targhee National Forest

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## Regions

The Forest Service has 9 regions, numbered 1 through 6 and 8 through 10. Region 7 was eliminated some years ago to standardize the size of regions. The forests in Region 7 were divided among Regions 8 and 9. Each region is composed of several national forests and usually includes several States. The person in charge of each region is called the Regional Forester. The regional office allocates budgets to the forests, coordinates activities between forests, monitors activities on the forests, and provides guidance for each forest plan. Maps are located at the end of this document.

## National Forests (NF) and Grasslands

Each forest or grassland is composed of several ranger districts. The person in charge of a national forest or grassland is called the Forest or Grassland Supervisor. The supervisor's office coordinates activities between ranger districts, allocates the budget, and provides technical support to each district.

## Ranger Districts (RD)

There are more than 600 ranger districts. The district ranger and district staff are usually the public's first point of contact with the Forest Service. Each district has a staff of 10 to 100 people. On-the-ground activities at the districts include trail construction and maintenance, fire prevention, operation of campgrounds, management of vegetation and wildlife habitat, and more depending on the local resources.



Figure 3- Forest Supervisor and Public Affairs Officer on a field tour of Alder Springs Project - a fuel reduction project under a stewardship contract with an added research component of examining how forest management may mitigate climate change. This is a joint project between the Mendocino NF and the Pacific Southwest Research Station. Courtesy R5.

## International Institute of Tropical Forestry (IITF)

The International Institute of Tropical Forestry is part of the Forest Service. The institute is located in Río Piedras, Puerto Rico, on the grounds of the University of Puerto Rico's Agricultural Experimental Station. The institute is dedicated to tropical forestry on an international level. Within the Forest Service's motto

of caring for the land and serving people, the institute's mission is to: Develop and exchange knowledge critical to sustaining tropical ecosystem benefits for humankind.



Figure 4-A volunteer at the International Institute of Tropical Forestry (IITF) sorts organic litter. The IITF was created in 1939 and is committed to research in tropical forestry and the transfer of technologies to address aspects of physical, social, and economic issues in managing tropical forests. Courtesy Elisabeth Hernandez.

## RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT (R&D)

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The Research and Development arm of the USDA Forest Service works at the forefront of science to improve the health and use of our Nation's forests and grasslands. Research has been part of the Forest Service mission since the agency's inception in 1905. Today, some 500-plus Forest Service researchers work in a range of biological, physical, and social science fields to promote sustainable management of Nation's diverse forests and rangelands. Their research covers a lot of territory, with programs in all 50 states, U.S. territories, and commonwealths. The work has a steady focus on informing policy and land management decisions for many issues such as invasive species, degraded river ecosystems, or sustainable ways to harvest forest products. The researchers work independently and with a range of partners, including other agencies, academia, nonprofit groups, and industry. The information and technology produced through basic and applied science programs is available to the public for its benefit and use.



Figure 5-Respiratory and circulatory data were collected from this black bear during wildlife research. Courtesy Scott Anderson, Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest.

## STATE AND PRIVATE FORESTRY (S&PF)

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The State and Private Forestry arm of the Forest Service reaches across the boundaries of national forests to States, Tribes, communities, and nonindustrial private landowners. State and Private Forestry is the Federal leader in providing technical and financial assistance to landowners and resource managers to help sustain the Nation's forests and protect communities and the environment from wildland fires.



Figure 6- Boy Scouts in Lower Merion, PA pitch in to plant neighborhood trees for Governor Rendell's TreeVitalization Initiative, Courtesy Phillip Rodbell, Program Manager, NA State and Private Forestry.

State and Private Forestry programs bring forest management assistance and expertise to a diversity of landowners, including the owners of small woodlots and Tribal, State, and Federal Governments, through cost-effective, nonregulatory partnerships. The staffs play a key role, along with others within the Forest Service and the Department of the Interior, in implementing the National Fire Plan to manage the impacts of wildland fires on communities and the environment.

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## ADMINISTRATION

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The Forest Service provides leadership, direction, quality assurance, and customer service in carrying out agency business and human resources programs, such as Americorps, Job Corps, and the volunteer program. The agency hires, trains, evaluates, and promotes its employees; pays employees and contractors; acquires office space, equipment and supplies; and acquires, supports, and maintains the computer and communications technology needed to ensure efficient and effective operations.

## HOW IT ALL HAPPENED

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In 1876, the Congress authorized appointment of a special forestry agent in USDA. The first units of what is now our National Forest System were created in 1891, when President Benjamin Harrison got power from Congress to set up Forest Reserves from the public domain under the Department of the Interior. Within the month, he created the first reserve as the Yellowstone Timberland Reserve in Wyoming. Soon after, Congress directed the country toward a forest conservation policy.

The Forest Reserves were opened for managed use in 1897. The Forest Service was created in 1905 with the transfer of the Forest Reserves from the Department of the Interior. The Act that opened the Reserves to managed use was strengthened and broadened in following years.

For more information, see *100 Years of Federal Forestry*  
(Agriculture Information Bulletin No. 402).

<http://www.foresthISTORY.org/ASPNET/Publications/100years/index.htm>

Today there are many public laws giving us the authority to do our work and the basic rules we must follow. One of the main laws is the "Multiple Use - Sustained Yield" Act of 1960. Our National Forests are managed under that Act. Another major law which directs our work is the "Forest and Range; and Renewable Resources Planning Act" of 1974, which we often speak of as "RPA."

There are many other laws which tell us what we are authorized and required to do by Congress. You need not read and remember all those laws; only know they exist. As you work, you may find one or more of those laws apply to what you are doing. When this happens, get a copy of the Act of Congress and refer to it in your daily work.

For a listing of laws affecting the Forest Service, and a description of what each one contains, see  
Selected Laws Affecting Forest Service Activities and laws passed since 2003  
<http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/>



Figure 7- Wildlife biologist monitors the Canada Lynx which is listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Critical habitats for threatened and endangered species (TES) contain features essential for their conservation and require special management. Courtesy Ed Lindquist, Superior NF, Minnesota.

## SAFETY

Forest Service employees are passionate about their work and make an incredible difference in caring for the land and serving people. However, no employee should get hurt on behalf of the agency. We are dedicated to providing a safe and healthful

environment for all employees, volunteers, and partners.

Every employee must be committed to ensuring our workplaces are free of recognized hazards and, prior to conducting any work project, all risks are mitigated to the lowest acceptable level possible. Safety cannot be an afterthought. It is a core value of our culture, ingrained in the character of every employee. As an Agency, we must endeavor to place the safety of our co-workers and ourselves above all else. This obligation requires integrity, trust, and leadership: the integrity of every employee to adhere to Agency standards, the trust in our leaders to place safety as the first priority, and leadership at all levels to provide a culture that encourages employees to communicate unsafe conditions, policies, or acts that could lead to accidents without fear of reprisal.

Figure 9- Employees face hazards every day. This Yakutat River Ranger carries a rifle for protection against grizzly bears. Tongass NF Alaska. Courtesy Ashley Atkinson

Please refer to the "Health and Safety Code Handbook" (FSH 6709.11) for standards of safe and healthy working conditions: <http://www.fs.fed.us/im/directives/fsh/6709.11/FSH6709.pdf> and when you have e-Authentication access, the Intranet Portal, [Safety and Occupational Health site](#).



Figure 8- Young man learns safety procedures during the Forest Service Chainsaw Certification Program being taught at the Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge, Illinois. Courtesy U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

"...We are often challenged with working in very high-risk and dynamic environments that are not always predictable. Consequently, we each have a responsibility to ensure that we are properly qualified, appropriately trained, and mentally and physically prepared to safely undertake our work. The prevention of accidents can only occur if we commit to safe work practices, continually assess our changing environment, refuse to assume unacceptable risks, and continually address unsafe conditions. Every employee must assume these responsibilities as a top priority. I expect every employee to take care of yourself, watch out for each other and adhere to our safety standards."

Thomas Tidwell  
17<sup>th</sup> Chief of the Forest Service

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## OUR BADGE AND SEAL

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A single design is used both as a badge and as the seal of the Forest Service. It features a fir-like tree as a symbol of the Nation's forests and has been in use since 1905. As a badge, this design is worn by Forest Rangers and other officials. As a seal, it is used on stationery and for other official uses.



For more information, see Forest Service Badges and Patches:

[http://www.foresthistory.org/ASPNET/Publications/first\\_century/sec2.htm](http://www.foresthistory.org/ASPNET/Publications/first_century/sec2.htm)

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## THE FOREST SERVICE AND THE PUBLIC

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All of us are public servants managing public lands and resources. We must keep in touch with the public that employs us. We don't make the big decisions all by ourselves. Many of them are made for us by the three main branches of Government: the executive, judicial, and legislative. Other decisions are made by the people.



Figure 11 – An employee from the Ozark-St. Francis NF in Arkansas talks with kids during the Mirror Lake Kid's fishing derby. Courtesy Kathryn Huie.

The Forest Service has a reputation for high productivity and service. It has been earned over a long period of time and it is up to us to maintain that reputation. We are a public service. We manage land belonging to the people. When the people visit their land, they expect us to be friendly, courteous, and helpful. While they are with us, they are our guests and we are their hosts.

We need contact with the people, and we need to involve them in our work. This is not only to know what the public wants, but also to give people a direct part in their own Government through us.

We are in constant contact with the public throughout the Nation. We have millions of visitors each year and we work with thousands of landowners, contractors, and 50 State governments.



Figure 10- FS Snow Rangers talk with skiers at the cross-country trail system on the Sawtooth NF, Idaho. Local partnerships help make it possible to maintain 150 miles of groomed snowmobile trails and more than 70 miles of groomed cross-country ski trails. Courtesy Ed Waldfeld.

## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

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### Woodsy Owl



For more than a quarter of a century, Woodsy Owl has been America's original and official environmental icon. Woodsy has been an anti-pollution symbol and taught us to, "Give a hoot; don't pollute!" On Earth Day, April 22, 1997, the "new, improved" Woodsy emerged to befriend a new generation of children, motivating them to form healthy, lasting relationships with nature. His new message, "Lend a hand, care for the land!" is positive, easily understood, and generates an interest in the stewardship of natural resources.

Woodsy Owl is part of the USDA Forest Service, and a protected symbol under Public Law 93-318.

Figure 12- Original Woodsy-Give a Hoot Don't Pollute.

### Smokey Bear Story

One spring day in 1950 in the Capitan Mountains of New Mexico, a fire lookout operator called in a smoke to the nearest ranger station. Word spread of a little cub with badly burned paws that had climbed up a tree to avoid the fire. A local rancher agreed to take the cub home. After hearing about the cub, a New Mexico Department of Game and Fish Ranger drove to the rancher's home to get the bear and fly him to a Santa Fe veterinarian where the burns were treated and bandaged.

News about the cub spread swiftly throughout the nation. The State Game Warden wrote to the Chief of the Forest Service, presenting the cub to the agency with the understanding that the small bear would be dedicated to a publicity program of fire prevention and conservation. The go-ahead was given to send the bear to Washington, DC, where he found a home at the National Zoo, becoming the living symbol of Smokey Bear.

The Cooperative Forest Fire Prevention Program, commonly known as the Smokey Bear Program, was created to maintain public awareness of the need to prevent human caused wildfires. It is managed by the Forest Service in cooperation with the Advertising Council, Inc. and the National Association of State Foresters.



Figure 13 - Nursed back to health under the watchful eye of Ray Bell, warden of the New Mexico Game and Fish Commission, Smokey stands on the plane that flew him from the Lincoln National Forest to Santa Fe for emergency treatment of his burns.

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For more information about Woodsy, Smokey and other programs, see the Forest Service Conservation Education web site: <http://www.fs.usda.gov>

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## ETHICS AND CONDUCT

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Ethical conduct by Federal employees is critical in maintaining the American public's trust in the integrity and fairness of its government. Additionally, the Office of Government Ethics issued regulations requiring that each new employee be given a minimum of one hour of official time within 90 days of appointment to complete ethics training. You will find everything you need to know about ethics on this web site: <http://fsweb.asc.fs.fed.us/HRM/ethics/training.php>

## LOOKING FORWARD

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As a new employee, you are part of our future. You will find that much of our work concerns the future. We plan ahead in decades. Our work each year includes the plans for what rangelands and recreation or wilderness areas will be needed in the 21st century. To do this, we keep long-range plans up to date to address:

- The long term demands for the resources of our forests and rangelands.
- What will be needed from the Forest Service in the future: how will our National Forest System, our State and Private Forestry services, and our research meet the demands for future resources?

We change these plans as new laws are passed or whenever there are changes in the environment or national needs. That is what we do and that is what you are a part of now and in the future. The next part in this guidebook will tell you how we are organized to do our work. Before you move on, you need to understand one more thing about us, our language.



Figure 14- District botanist propagates native plants to restore areas disturbed by activities such as off highway vehicle damage, fire, mining, and timber harvesting. Courtesy Region 5.

## SPEAKING OUR LANGUAGE

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Like many other special organizations, we have our own terms and abbreviations. We have already mentioned such terms as USDA and RPA. There will be more. In your day to day work, you will need to ask your co-workers to explain acronyms they use. Your co-workers are accustomed to these questions and you should not feel uncomfortable asking for explanations. Before long, you too will be explaining the acronyms you use.

For a list of Forest Service acronyms please visit the onboarding portal at <http://www.fs.fed.us/fsjobs/neic.shtml>. For a Phonetic Guide to our National Forests go to the Washington Office of Communications web page and look on the right side of the page under reference materials. <http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/pao/>

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For more information about the Forest Service please see *The U.S. Forest Service – An Overview*  
[http://www.fs.fed.us/documents/USFS\\_An\\_Overview\\_0106MJS.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/documents/USFS_An_Overview_0106MJS.pdf)

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## FORESTS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

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The Forest Service is known as a "decentralized agency". Most decisions about our everyday work are made at places outside our central office. Like any other large group, we have a headquarters. Ours is in

Washington, D.C. We call it the Washington Office or "WO", for short. Although there is much to be done at the WO, most of our work projects are done in other parts of the country in what we call "the field". About 97 percent of our employees work in the field.



Figure 15- The historical Yates Federal Building houses the USDA Forest Service Headquarters. The "big red brick building," is located just across from the National Mall.

### THE WASHINGTON OFFICE (WO)

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The WO supports the Chief of the Forest Service and assists the field. Our Chief has an Associate Chief, Deputy Chiefs and staff for other critical areas. These positions change from time to time so please see the Washington Office web page for current information. <http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/chief/> and the Headquarters staff list for up-to-date listings. <http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/stafflist/>

## THE FIELD

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To understand our work in the field, we must look at it in two ways: what is done, and how we are organized to do it. What is done was described earlier in this guide:

- Management of the National Forests, National Grasslands, and the Land Utilization Projects
- Assistance and cooperation with State forestry and private owners of forest land
- Research and Development



## ORGANIZATIONAL LEVELS

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How we are organized to do all this is best explained by showing it in four levels:

- The first level, which we have already discussed, is the WO.
- The second level is made up of the Regions, Area, and Stations (R/S/A).
- The third level contains the National Forests and our Research Project locations.
- The fourth level involves Ranger Districts.

Figure 16- Employees build an enclosure in a new clearcut to monitor aspen regeneration both inside and outside of the fence. The information from this Wildlife Habitat Improvement project will be used to understand the impact of elk, deer, and moose on aspen regeneration in the Arapaho National Recreation Area, in Colorado. Courtesy Wendy Magwire

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## Job Corps Centers

In 1964 President Lyndon B. Johnson laid out his plan for the Great Society. His vision for America was one in which all segments of society could participate equally. To this end, The Economic Opportunity Act, which created Job Corps, was passed. The mission of Forest Service Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers (JCCC) is to train eligible youth, ages 16 to 24 with educational, social and vocational skills, while assisting in the conservation of the Nation's public natural resources.

Job Corps falls under Business Operations at the WO level.

The talents of Job Corps students are enlisted in a diverse array of Forest Service programs, although our students are most widely known for their program contributions in urban forestry, hazardous fuels reduction, construction, and firefighting. Not only has Job Corps been an integral part of Forest Service history, it is an invaluable resource that has produced past and present Forest Service leaders, including district rangers, forest supervisors, and regional foresters. Learn more at <http://fsweb.jc.wo.fs.fed.us/>.



Figure 17- Mingo Job Corps student firefighters perform "Mop-up" efforts by feeling for hot spots in burned areas. Courtesy Robert Barth, JCCC.

## The Second Level

The second level works directly with the Chief and the WO. It is made up of three groups. Now let us look at each group, beginning with the Regions.

### Regions

The National Forest System covers all the public lands under our care and management and all the tasks we have in managing that land and its resources such as:

- Fire and Aviation Management
- Engineering
- Information Management
- Ecosystem Assessment, Planning, Appeals, and Litigation
- Recreation, Heritage, and Wilderness
- Air, Water, Lands, Soils, Minerals, Timber, Wildlife, Range, and Environmental Services
- Law Enforcement and Investigations
- Civil Rights, Recruitment and Retention
- Public and Governmental Relations



Figure 18- Regional Forester, Forest Supervisor, Directors and Forest and District specialists frequently conduct "field reviews" to stay current on planned and current projects taking place on the forests in their region. Courtesy Ed Waldefeld, Sawtooth NF.

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To carry out all these functions, we have divided the country into nine Regions and assigned each Region a name and number. There is no longer a Region 7.

- R1 - Northern Region
- R2 - Rocky Mountain Region
- R3 - Southwestern Region
- R4 - Intermountain Region
- R5 - Pacific Southwest Region
- R6 - Pacific Northwest Region
- R8 - Southern Region
- R9 - Eastern Region
- R10 - Alaska Region

In charge of each Region is a Regional Forester working in a Regional Office (RO) and assisted by a staff. Regional Foresters are responsible to the Chief of the Forest Service for all activities of the National Forest System in their respective Regions. In each of the Regions are National Forests. Some Regions contain National Grasslands. There are also Land Utilization Projects, which are smaller units managed as part of the National Forest System.

State and Private Forestry (S&PF) programs are carried out by the Regional Foresters in the States generally west of the Mississippi River, and in the South. In the Northeast, there are so many States and so much privately-owned land that a special organization is needed there. That brings us to the next group in the second level: the S&PF Area.

## Northeastern Area (NA) State and Private Forestry

In the Eastern Region (R-9), the Regional Forester does not have direct responsibility for State and Private Forestry programs. An Area Director is in charge of this, and carries out responsibilities through specialists assigned to the Area Office and Field Offices. The Area Director is responsible to the Chief for all S&PF activities in the Northeastern Area.



Figure 20- NA is studying the impacts of the invasive species Asian Longhorn Beetle which infests a wide variety of hardwood trees. Courtesy NA.

## Stations

Our research is done in many places. It is controlled at the second level through Research Stations and our Forest Products Laboratory. Each Research Station and the FPL is headed by a Station Director. Each of these Directors reports directly to the Chief. As in other cases, names and abbreviations are used for the Research Stations as well as for the Laboratory:

- Forest Products Laboratory (FPL)
- International Institute of Tropical Forestry (IITF)
- Northern Research Station (NRS)
- Pacific Northwest Station (PNW)
- Pacific Southwest Station (PSW)
- Intermountain Station (RMRS)
- Southern Research Station (SRS)



Figure 19- FS Mounted Law Enforcement Patrol at a Rainbow Family gathering. The Law Enforcement and Investigations organization is an integral part of the Forest Service. Courtesy R4.

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Each Research Station has a number of research projects in progress at all times. The number of projects and their locations are changed as needed. There may be one or more Experimental Forest to serve a Research Station. For examples of Experimental Forests please visit the Southern Research Station Experimental Forest page

<http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/organization/exforest/>

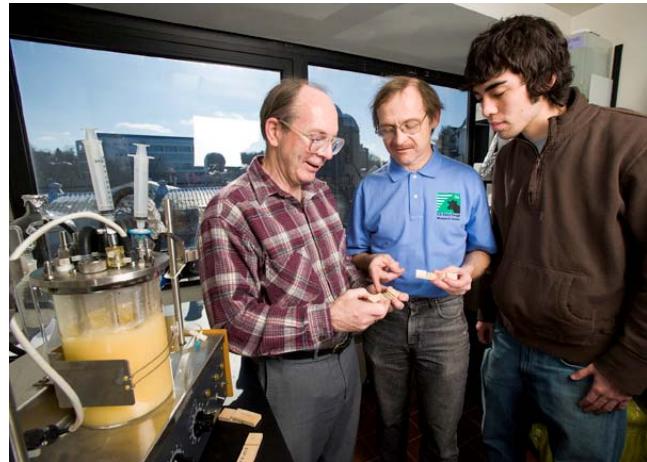


Figure 21- FS Forest Product Lab employees discuss tests of a new biobased glue. Small pieces of wood were glued together and then stressed until they broke apart. Courtesy Steven Ausmus.

## The Third Level

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Many of us work at the third level of operations. This level includes our 155 National Forests, administered by 121 Forest Supervisors, and more than 80 Research Projects.

### National Forests

There are more than 150 national forests and 20 grasslands. Each forest is composed of several ranger districts. The person in charge of a national forest is called the forest supervisor. The district rangers from the districts within a forest work for the forest supervisor. The headquarters of a national forest is called the Supervisor's Office (SO). This level coordinates activities between districts, allocates the budget, and provides technical support to each district.

## The Fourth Level

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### Ranger Districts

The district ranger and his or her staff may be your first point of contact within the Forest Service. There are more than 600 ranger districts. Each district has a staff of 10 to 100 people. The districts vary in size from 50,000 acres to more than 1 million acres. Many on-the-ground activities occur on the ranger districts, including trail construction and maintenance, operation of campgrounds, and management of vegetation and wildlife habitat.

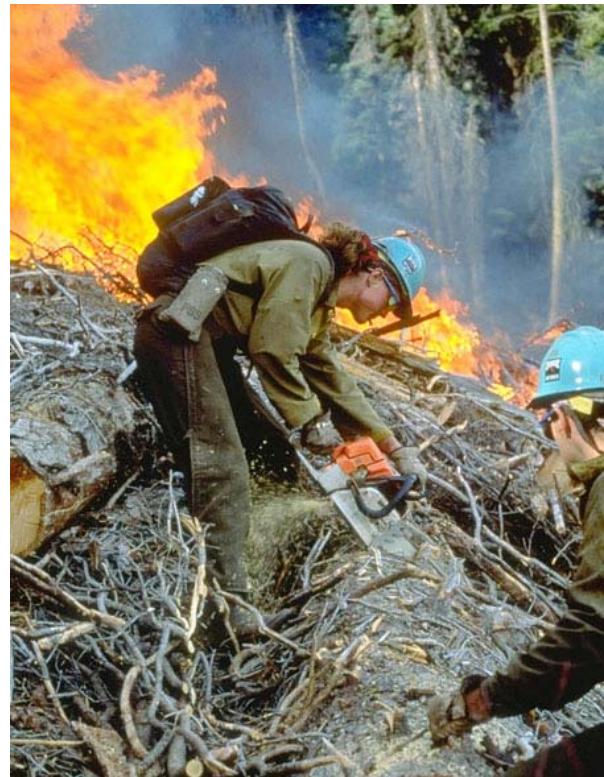
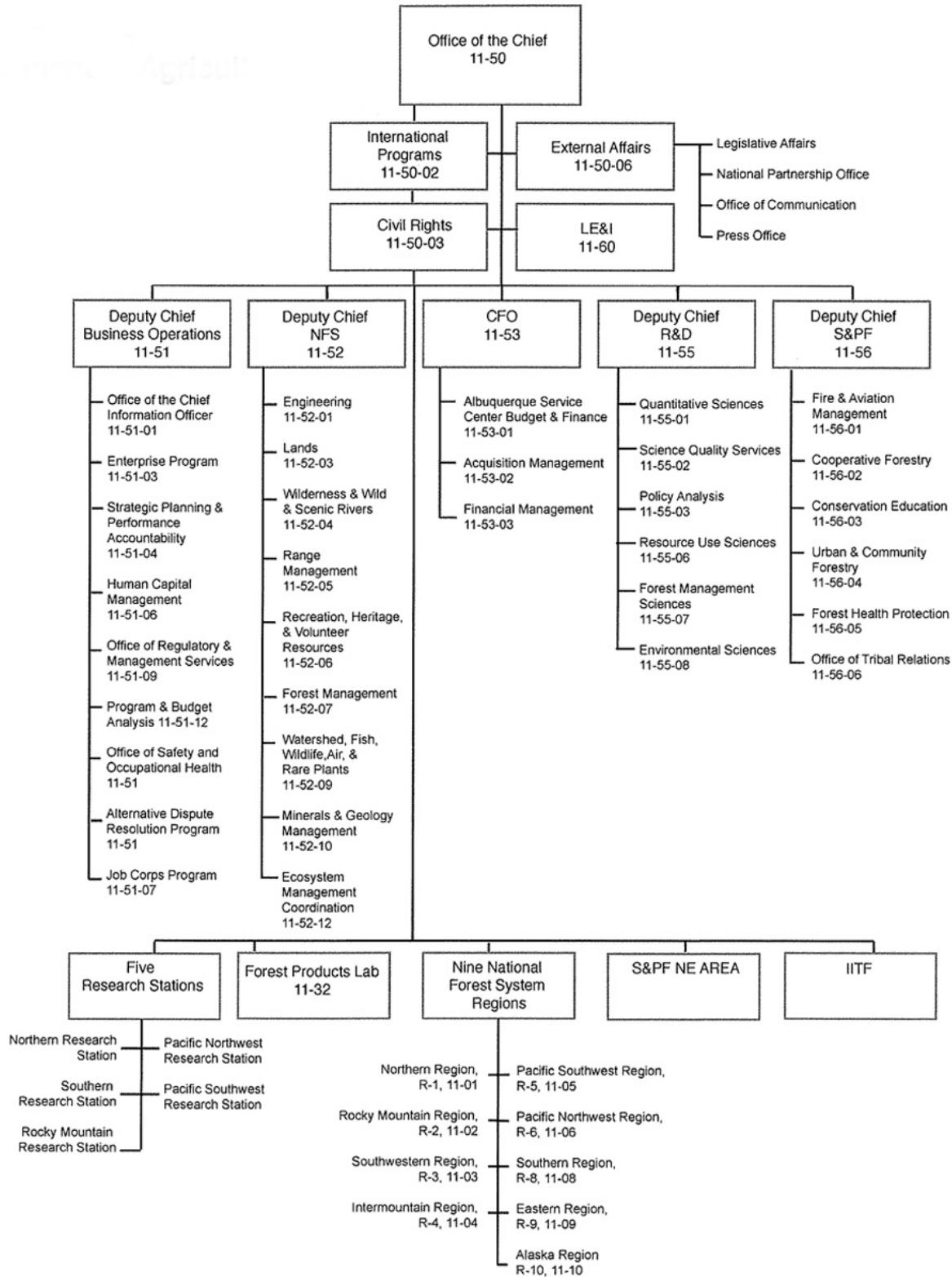


Figure 22- Fire fighters break up fuels to slow down fire spread. The Forest Service has managed wildland fire for more than 100 years. We still use hand tools and strong backs, aircraft and engines. And we are still the best wildland fire organization in the world. But we recognize the role of natural fire in the health of many ecosystems, and we continue to move forward through research and technology to understand and manage fire better. Courtesy Ravi Fry.

# Welcome to the Forest Service: A Guidebook for New Employees

## Working Together

The whole system, from USDA to the 4th level in the Forest Service is shown below. All units in the Forest Service work together to accomplish our mission. The Forest Service also employs many volunteers at all organizational levels.



## Line and Staff

There are two types of responsibility in the Forest Service:

- Those who are responsible for policies, decisions, orders, instructions, and directives have what we call "*line responsibilities*".
- Others who are responsible for support, advice, assistance, services, and reports have "*staff responsibilities*".

### The Line

The Chief of the Forest Service is the top line officer in our agency, followed by the Associate Chief and the Deputy Chiefs. The Associate Chief and Deputy Chiefs have line responsibilities in their assigned areas of activity. In the field, all the following are line officers:

- Regional Foresters and Deputy Regional Foresters
- Forest Supervisors and Deputy Forest Supervisors
- District Rangers
- Job Corps Center Directors
- Area and Station Directors and Deputy and Assistant Directors
- Project Leaders

### The Staff

The line officers need support, advice, assistance, and services. The staffs assigned to each line level provide that support. The Chief, Associate Chief, and Deputy Chiefs are assisted by the WO staff. Other line officers

have similar staffs tailored to their needs at the second, third, and fourth levels.

At the Regional level, for example, the Regional Forester may have a staff of expert assistants to cover a wide number of functions that are unique to that region.

Many more people are needed in staff work than are needed in line positions. The responsibilities of those in staff work are no less important than those in the line. Although the employees in line positions make the major decisions, they rely on the staff to make sure the decisions are sound, based upon the best advice and properly carried out. The main difference between line and staff work is:

- The line directs what is to be done.
- The staff advises the line and supports what is to be done.



Figure 24- Collecting data for range trending which determines the present state of health of the range in relation to what it could be with a given set of environmental and managerial factors Caribou-Targhee NF, Idaho. Courtesy Vic Bradfield.



Figure 23 - Forester counting annual rings to determine tree age and correlations between environmental factors that affect tree growth like precipitation patterns and fire. Fishlake NF, Utah. Courtesy Bert Lowry

## YOU AND YOUR COWORKERS

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You were appointed to your position in the Forest Service. There are three types of appointments to Forest Service positions:

- Permanent
- Temporary
- Excepted

It's important to know which type of appointment you have. There are advantages and some drawbacks to each type. The more you understand them, the better you will be able to make choices about your career development.

### PERMANENT APPOINTMENTS

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Employees with permanent appointments have competed with others to get the jobs they hold. This is called competitive status.

### TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

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The Government often hires people temporarily for special kinds of work. The length of time an employee is hired for temporary work depends on the needs of the Government. Temporary employees have a not to exceed (NTE) date beyond which they cannot work. (There are times when this can be extended.) They can also be separated before the NTE date for such reasons as lack of funds, lack of work, poor performance, or misconduct.

### EXCEPTED APPOINTMENTS

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Excepted Service, are civil service appointments within the Federal government that do not confer competitive status. There are many types of excepted appointments, covering both temporary and permanent positions and full-time or part-time work. Excepted appointments allow managers to match known skills with current needs with a minimum of delay.

### NON-TRADITIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

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With more centralization organizations, it is important for agency leadership and all employees to understand the need to better integrate employees in our non-traditional organizations and to provide for their safety. These changes have necessitated creating some common definitions for employees within the current and future Forest Service organization. Here are a common set of definitions for components of our organization:

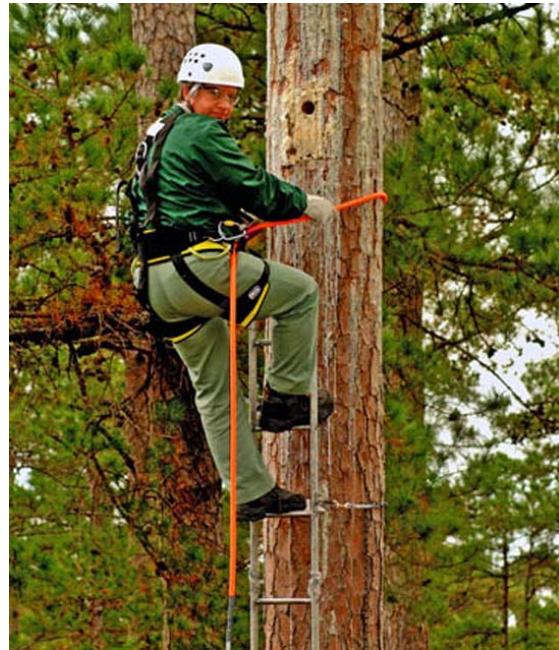


Figure 25- Seasonal or temporary employees have responsibility for many field projects. Here a Superior NF Mississippi employee is monitoring an insert used for birds in a wildlife habitat improvement project. The FS is committed to the restoration and sustainability of ecosystems and their components. Courtesy Bill Meriwether.

## Welcome to the Forest Service: A Guidebook for New Employees

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**Detached Organization/Employee:** An organizational entity/employee of another unit that is physically located apart from its parent organization (i.e., WO Detached Range Management). Employee in a detached organization may or may not be co-located with their immediate supervisor of record.

**Virtual Position:** A position that is intended to be a field resource of a centralized organization which can be located “virtually anywhere” including positions of employees in alternate workplaces. These types of positions (Human Resources Management, Budget and Finance, Chief Information Office) generally provide services to a wide variety of field units.



Employees in geo-virtual positions are stationed in specific geographic areas where they are responsible for providing services (such as radio technicians who work for the Chief Information Office) and technical assistance to multiple forests. Employees in virtual positions may or may not be co-located with their immediate supervisors of record or may be hosted on other units.

Figure 26- The Forest Service has a number of virtual employees who are able to do their work from hosted units. Courtesy GSTC. <http://www.fs.fed.us/gstc/>

**Hosted Employee:** An employee who works for a centralized organization and is located at a unit (WO, Regional Office, Supervisor Office, Ranger District, Research Station, Area, etc.) that is “hosting” their work space. A hosted employee may or may not be in a virtual position. A hosted employee may or may not be co-located with their immediate supervisor of record.

**Host Unit Official:** A management official (line or staff officer) on the hosting unit who is the official contact for a hosted employee on that unit. The host unit official is physically located at the unit of the hosted employee.

**Visiting Employee:** An employee who works for either a centralized or de-centralized organization whose work takes him/her to multiple units to perform their duties. Visiting employees are in travel status when they are on another unit (i.e., firefighters, researchers or forest inventory personnel).

As you get to know your coworkers, you will discover all the different functions and positions, including students and volunteers. Take some time and talk with them to learn more about what they do.

Figure 27- The prototype for the ADA 100 Rotary Hand Pump was developed by the Forest Service Missoula Technology and Development Center (MTDC)  
<http://fsweb.mtdc.wo.fs.fed.us/about/overview.htm>

MTDC and the San Dimas Technology and Development Center (SDTDC)  
<http://fsweb.sdtdc.wo.fs.fed.us/> are detached units of the Washington Office Engineering organization. Courtesy MTDC.



## ALBUQUERQUE SERVICE CENTER (ASC)

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The Albuquerque Service Center (ASC) is a modern, state-of-the-art facility that serves as the hub of the Forest Service's Budget and Finance, Information Technology, and Human Resource Management services such as:

- Awards & Performance
- Benefits & Retirement
- Budget Execution
- Civil Rights/Diversity
- Classification
- Collections/Receivables
- Accounts Receivable
- Employee/Labor Relations
- Employment
- Equipment & Electronic Devices
- Grants & Agreements
- Incident Finance
- Pay & Leave
- Payments/Receivables
- PCs & Laptops
- Performance Measurements
- Property & Working Capital Fund
- Purchasing - Equipment & Software
- Resource Audit
- Reports
- Security & Privacy
- Self-Service Technologies
- Software
- Sustainable Operations
- Training
- Travel
- Workers' Compensation

Two helpful web sites you will want to visit:

<http://fsweb.myadmin.fs.fed.us/>  
<http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/ecenter/>



Figure 28- ASC HRM Knowledge Database Team Supervisor analyzes the status of team projects. The Knowledge Management division provides services to all FS employees and HRM program areas through the Customer Relations Management (CRM) HR technologies.

## BUDGET AND FINANCE (B&F)

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Budget & Finance functions as an agency-wide center for the performance of budget and finance services such as travel for temporary duty and transfer of station, payments, claims for and against the Forest Service, budget operations, and financial statements and reporting. The well-trained Customer Service representatives in the Contact Center are ready to assist you with any type of B&F related question. They have received training in various B&F staff areas and have access to a number of financial management operating systems. Current contact information can be found at the B&F web site. If you do not have access to a computer you can ask your supervisor or coworker for the contact information. For more information, please visit the B&F web page: <http://fsweb.asc.fs.fed.us/bfm/>

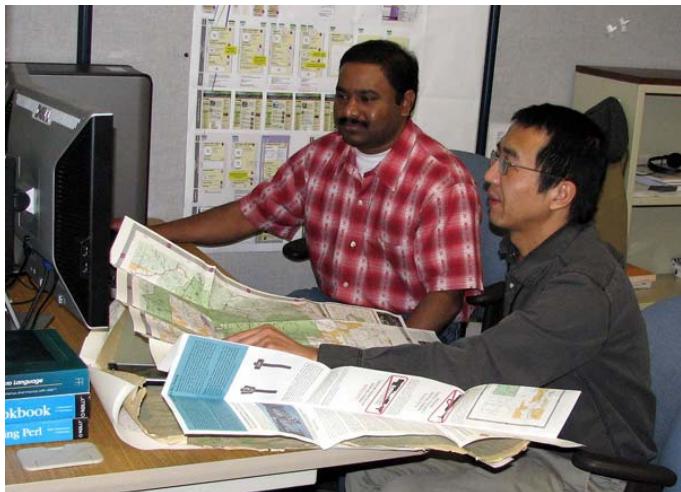
# Welcome to the Forest Service: A Guidebook for New Employees

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## THE CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICE (CIO)

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Chief Information Office oversees policy, direction and services for information technology (IT) and information resources (IR) in the Forest Service, including computers, radios, telephones and networks, as well as application management. "Enterprise" or FS-wide policies about computer security and software, telephones, handheld mobile radios, and other IT products are determined through the CIO, which works closely with Forest Service regional and national leadership to ensure that these products



support your work. Be sure to get the most current Customer Help Desk contact information from your supervisor or check their web site at: <http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/irm/index.php> For internal information, visit the CIO Employee Engagement site: <http://fsteams.fs.fed.us/sites/Employee-Engagement/default.aspx>

Figure 29- Employees at GSTC - Geospatial Service & Technology Center. The Forest Service uses many intense computer systems and applications which provide information and support for a variety of database, data collection, and analysis products. Courtesy GSTC.

## HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT (HRM)

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Human Resources Management (HRM) has employees located at the ASC, WO, and in the field. HRM provides Human Resources policy and services. The HRM web site is your one-stop source for obtaining information on Human Resources policy and operations. It serves as a gateway to policy, service-wide and external information you will need to do your job and is a central location to find answers to your Human Resources questions. The Contact Center is your resource for all HRM questions and actions. Current contact information can be found at the HRM web site. If you do not have access to a computer ask your supervisor or coworker for the contact information. <http://fsweb.asc.fs.fed.us/HRM/>

### Homeland Security Presidential Directive 12 (HSPD 12)

The Homeland Security Presidential Directive 12 staff of the HRM organization is responsible for collecting and reviewing all security clearance forms for accuracy. All appointments in the Federal Service require some level of background investigation, screening, and/or security clearance and a "LincPass". This is the name of the USDA smart card. The card "links" your personal identity to the card and to your ability to access Federal buildings and computer systems with the card. For more information, please visit the HSPD-12 web page: <http://fsweb.asc.fs.fed.us/HRM/security/overview.php>

The unique spelling of LincPass is in honor of President Abraham Lincoln, founder of the Department of Agriculture.

# Welcome to the Forest Service: A Guidebook for New Employees

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## CIVIL RIGHTS (CR)

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The mission of Civil Rights in the Forest Service is to deliver a comprehensive and result oriented Civil Rights Program for customers while ensuring equality, justice, and full participation in Agency activities and programs. The mission is achieved through compliance, advocacy, and education. Learn more at: <http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/cr/>. The Civil Rights Staff serves as the focal point for:

- Title VII – Employment Discrimination Complaint Program
- Title VI – Federal Financial Assistance Programs
- Persons with Disabilities Program and Reasonable Accommodation
- Special Emphasis Programs
- Compliance Reviews
- Partnership & Outreach
- Policy Development
- Civil Rights Impact Analysis and Reporting

### VISION STATEMENT

To be a model organization which is devoted to fairness and equality in Agency employment and delivery of programs

## CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION (CT)

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In September 2009, Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack called on USDA to transform its culture in order to better fulfill its mission. The goal of Cultural Transformation is to make USDA an inclusive, high-performance organization. You will see and hear about cultural transformation in your work place and its impact on our planning and decisions. To learn more please visit the Cultural Transformation web page: <http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/chief/culturaltransformation/>

## UNIONS

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As a Federal employee, you have the right to form, join, or assist any labor organization or to refrain from such activity, freely and without fear of penalty or reprisal. You have the right to act for a labor organization in the capacity of a representative and to engage in collective bargaining. Unless your position has been determined to be excluded due to Statutory definitions for a management official, a supervisor, a confidential employee, or other criteria; or unless you are assigned to a location that has not been organized by a union, you are considered to be a bargaining unit employee and have the right to be represented by a union. For more information about unions in the federal sector, visit the Federal Labor Relations Authority web page at <http://www.flra.gov/statute> and the USDA Labor Management Relations web page at <http://www.dlm.usda.gov/employ/labor/index.htm>.

Three unions have been recognized as having exclusive representational rights for Forest Service employees. They are: American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE); National Association of Government Employees (NAGE); and National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE). For a list of Forest Service units that are represented by unions, for more information about various collective bargaining agreements negotiated with the Forest Service, and for Union contact information, visit the Forest Service Labor Relations web page at [http://fsweb.asc.fs.fed.us/HRM/labor\\_relations/union.php](http://fsweb.asc.fs.fed.us/HRM/labor_relations/union.php).

## EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

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The Forest Service has several programs to help you with your day to day challenges. One of these programs, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), is designed to help employees with workplace and domestic violence, stress and other problems which may be affecting job performance or conduct. Other psychosocial services are available for employees and their qualified family members.

Another program, Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) provides employees and management ways to address conflict issues before the situation becomes more serious. ADR can be used at any level of conflict or dispute, including informal and formal Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) issues and negotiated or administrative grievances. Additionally, ADR services are not just for conflict resolution. ADR services include group facilitations, conflict profiling, team building, communications training, self-awareness training, and many other services.

If you have questions about your local EAP or ADR provider, please go to your main local website (region, station, etc.) and/or your EAP coordinator. For example, if you are part of a forest or district, please check your regional office's website. All EAPs are at the local level. For more information about these programs and other programs, be sure to check the National Employee Center web page: <http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/ecenter/>



Figure 30 – Pictographs are an important part of the cultural heritage program in the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness, Salmon Challis NF, Idaho. The Forest Service is committed to protecting the cultural resources on the national forests and grasslands and making them accessible for the public to appreciate and enjoy.

## THE FOREST SERVICE DIRECTIVES SYSTEM

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The Forest Service Directives System is the primary basis for management and control of all internal programs of the Forest Service and the primary source of administrative direction to Forest Service employees. It is organized in such a way that, once you understand how it is set up, you will be able to find the information you need to do your job. It is set up numerically and the numbering system corresponds to the filing system, too.

The Forest Service Directives System is made up of two components: The Forest Service Manual and the Forest Service Handbooks.

### **The Forest Service Manual (FSM)**

The Forest Service Manual contains legal authorities, objectives, policies, responsibilities, instructions, and guidance needed on a continuing basis by Forest Service line officers and primary staff. It applies to more than one unit of the organization. Service-wide Issuances are listed on this page:  
<http://www.fs.fed.us/im/directives/>

## The Forest Service Handbooks (FSH)

Handbooks are directives that provide instructions and guidance on how to proceed with a specialized phase of a program or activity. They are established in the FSM and are published as separate documents. There are over 100 Service wide handbooks. Each one has information and instructions on a special subject. Service-wide Issuances are listed on this page:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/im/directives/>

## The Numbering System

Manual direction is organized by series, titles, chapters, and sections. Each series is subdivided into various titles, which are further subdivided into chapters. Chapters are divided into numerous sections.

For example, the coding structure in the FSM works as follows:

Example: 6142.1

Series 6000 deals with Management Services. Title 6100 is Personnel Management. Chapter 6140 is Performance, Training, and Awards. Section 6142 is Performance Appraisal. Section 6142.1 is Procedures.

The manual and handbook are related. The text in Section 6142.1 (Procedures) directs the reader to the FSH 6109.13, Performance, Training, and Awards Handbook. This handbook covers guidance and procedures for supervisors, employees, and personnel specialists on performance appraisals, employee development, and performance awards.

For more information about the Directives System see FSM 1100 and FSH 1109.12, Directives Preparation Handbook. For more information about Manual Coding and Structure see FSM 1111.2.



Figure 31- Forest Service ecologist and herpetologist carefully search wetland debris samples for amphibians. Habitats surrounding wetlands are critical to the management of natural resources.  
Courtesy Peggy Greb

## How to Find What You Want

The Directive System Index is FSH 1109.11. It is the key to finding what you need. The index is a list of key terms, from A to Z, followed by FSM and FSH codes where you can find information on each topic.

Using the Index saves time. It leads you to the exact place in a single directive where the answer to your question is waiting. It saves time for others too by reducing your need to go to your supervisor or co-workers for help.

Our Directives System must be up to date at all times. Things change in the Forest Service, sometimes quickly. When a new law is passed or an old one is revised, there may be changes in the work we do. Any change must get out to all of our offices. We make sure it does through our Directives System.

# Welcome to the Forest Service: A Guidebook for New Employees

## AGRICULTURE LEARNING (AGLEARN)

You may already have an Agriculture Learning account, if not you soon will. The AgLearn system is USDA's department-wide system for managing training records and activity at USDA. AgLearn is one of the USDA eGovernment strategic initiatives and directly supports the Presidential eGovernment initiative for e-Training. You can look forward to using AgLearn to search, access, enroll in, and record all training opportunities through the web, any time, any place because AgLearn is accessed through your business computer and even your personal computer on the world wide web.

Learning opportunities in AgLearn include both online resources, such as courses, webinars, videos and books, as well as registration in traditional, instructor-led training. AgLearn is the official system of record for all training for USDA employees. You can also plan your future career development in the system with the online AgLearn Individual Development Plan (IDP), and submit external training requests via the AgLearn online SF-182. By using AgLearn, you have access to a wealth of learning resources anytime and anyplace an Internet presence is available.

## EMPLOYEE AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Employee development is more than just formal training. It is anything that helps your performance and potential. We encourage you to take advantage of our career planning and training programs. They will help you develop your skills and knowledge.

The development cycle process is a partnership between you and your supervisor. Your supervisor can help you determine which development opportunities will enhance identified competencies. The result

will be an IDP. Your IDP should fit your personal development as well as fulfill the need for a skilled and knowledgeable person in your position.

The responsibility for your development will rest mainly on you, with your supervisor assisting along the way. Development opportunities will better equip you for your present job and also prepare you for future jobs.



The Forest Service system is based on equal access to development by all our employees.

For more information on career planning, see FSM 6141 and FSH 6109.13 Performance, Training, and Awards Handbook. <http://www.fs.fed.us/im/directives/dughml/fsh6000.html>

## Welcome to the Forest Service: A Guidebook for New Employees

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The Employee Development web site has information and suggestions to help with your development goals. Visit this web site <http://fsweb.asc.fs.fed.us/HRM/training/empdev/index.php> to find out about information and opportunities waiting for you:

- Explore the Employee and Leadership Development Course Catalog.
- Use the self-assessment tool to assess your skills and interests, and explore development activities.
- Identify competencies to include in your IDP.
- Review the job aids to create a powerful annual IDP and begin your competency development.
- Learn about the importance of mentoring to help successfully guide your development.
- Design a career path that motivates you, fulfills your need to achieve, and matches your work and living style.
- Embark on a personal and professional leadership journey.

### Leadership Development

Even as a new employee it is not too soon to look into leadership development opportunities. Leadership development isn't only for people who are supervisors or managers. Every employee leads through his or her actions and words, by example, and by influencing others.

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Find out more about Leadership Development at this site:  
<http://fsweb.asc.fs.fed.us/HRM/training/leadership.php>

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Classroom-style training, online sessions, and reading materials can help you learn more about leadership competencies and how to apply them. However, applying what you know requires practice. Explore experiential opportunities that put you in real-life situations where you can practice your knowledge. Find an opportunity to participate in activities like these:

- Volunteer to be on a special teams, project, committee or work group.
- Let your supervisor know you'd like a developmental stretch assignment.
- Get exposure to a unit other than your own by doing a shadow assignment. This can be any length of time – even just a day or two so it will not impact your current job.
- Take the on-line supervisor training.
- Pursue a detail.
- Read books, magazines, and journals that address current issues and directions in your field
- Join organizations outside the Forest Service.

Now's the time! Get the EDGE on your career and discover how you can enhance your growth through continual learning.

## ENJOY YOUR NEW CAREER WITH THE FOREST SERVICE

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Starting a new job is like walking into the middle of a movie. Everyone around you knows what's going on, but you don't have a clue. You wonder if things will ever make sense as you attempt to piece together the plot. As a new employee, you will have many experiences while you sort through the who, what, when and why of a new work environment. If you don't want this experience to feel like you walked into a horror movie, follow these tips to insure a successful transition.

**Dress Code** - As people are getting to know you and forming their opinions about you, dress to the highest level of the standard that is recognized in your workplace. This gesture shows that you are professional, serious about your work, and that you respect your employer.

**Smile** - Sounds so basic, but means so much. You have five to 10 seconds to make an impression, so pay close attention not only to the clothes on your back but to the look on your face. To others, a smile says "confidence" and identifies you as an approachable and likeable individual.

**Introduce Yourself** - Remember that 85% of your success in the workplace is based on your people skills, so extend your hand and say your first and last name to everyone who crosses your path.

**Take Notes** - After meeting co-workers; receiving assignments or information; and hearing advice from coworkers, take notes. It is impossible to remember everything that comes your way during the first week on a job, but if you make notes you can refer to and review the names of those you have met during your first days, you'll make yourself feel more confident and comfortable.

**Learn Names** - Learn the names of every member of your team. If you are in a situation in which you forget a person's name, the best solution is simply to apologize and ask the person's name again. Use your "new" status to ask lots of questions and meet lots of people at your unit.

**Meetings** - To insure your meetings manners measure up: arrive on time; introduce yourself to others as they arrive; pay attention and be an active listener; and offer to help others with meeting materials or equipment.

**Connect With Others** - Make certain that your radar is working as you begin to interact with co-workers, supervisors and clients. Each person has a unique style and deals with people in his or her own way. The quicker you can identify and adapt to the style of each person, the sooner you will build a positive and productive relationship with that person.

**Be a Team Player** - Your employer hired you because he or she thought you would fit in and be a good addition to the agency. Demonstrate your willingness to be part of the Forest Service whenever you can. Show that you are willing to help out, even if it isn't in your job description.



Figure 32- FS employee poses with Smokey Bear during the Albuquerque Get Outdoors Day. The FS frequently partners with other agencies to reach first-time visitors to public lands and reconnect youth to the great outdoors.

## Welcome to the Forest Service: A Guidebook for New Employees

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**Ask Questions** - No one expects you to solve all the agency's problems on your first few days so relax a bit, and always ask questions or ask for help when you need it. If you have a contribution, make it, but if not, do more listening and absorbing these first days on the job.

**Keep Your Supervisor Informed** - Your supervisor is not a mind-reader, so keep him/her informed of how you are doing. Especially in those early days, meet with your supervisor to establish a rapport and relationship. Request meetings with your supervisor on a consistent basis to review performance. Express interest in moving ahead and ask what else you can be doing to get to that next step. Don't bring your supervisor every problem; instead, for minor issues, ask for help from your co-workers.

**Network** - You will notice that many employees in the Forest Service have a network of coworkers who have worked on projects together, are in the same discipline or have met in meetings and training. Don't leave networking to chance. Take advantage of every opportunity to network with key people in your organization and profession. Just because you have a new job does not mean you suspend your network; constantly manage and grow your network of contacts, because you never know when a problem or opportunity will arise. Networking with key people can also help you in finding one or more mentors.

**Social Networking** – The Forest Service is capitalizing on the opportunities and benefits of social networking platforms and appropriate social networking presence. Emerging opportunities on social networking platforms provide a tremendous asset and communications tool for the Forest Service. Ask your co-workers about internal social media like SharePoint. Also, check out Forest Service social media sites through the WO home page: <http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/>

**Find a Mentor** - You don't need to jump on this task your first day, but as you get introduced to senior staff, begin thinking about developing a mentoring relationship with a member of management above you and outside your work group. Mentoring has numerous benefits, from a simple sounding board to someone who helps direct and advance your career within the organization.

Being the newest member of your unit is both challenging and exciting. You'll be faced with difficulties and opportunities, and your goal should be to make the most of all situations. Remember to relax, keep your mind open, get to know your team members, and do your work and you should go far in making a lasting impression and reputation.

*As a new employee you will be asked to give feedback about your onboarding experience with the Forest Service. This feedback may be in the form of a survey or an interview with your supervisor.*

*We appreciate all of your comments and suggestions!*

## Welcome to the Forest Service: A Guidebook for New Employees

**Welcome to the Forest Service, a community of people who share a common love of the outdoors - and a collective goal of meeting our agency's mission -  
Caring for the Land and Serving People.  
It's an awesome responsibility – but the rewards are as limitless as the views.**



Courtesy Dusty Vaughn

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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